

Top Secret

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MEMORANDUM

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

117

21 February 1967

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Units of the US 4th Infantry Division were attacked on 21 February by an estimated battalion of Communists. In Saigon, the Directorate's military members have reportedly had an informal survey made to determine the chances of a military candidate in the upcoming presidential election.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
An estimated enemy battalion attacked units of the US 4th Infantry Division operating in the central highlands on 21 February (Para. 1). Communist arms caches were discovered in two northern provinces on 20 February (Paras. 2-3). Four Americans were killed during a brief battle northwest of Hue on 21 February (Para. 4). Ten enemy soldiers were killed during a short engagement with US Marines in Quang Nam Province (Para. 5). A CIDG force killed 37 Viet Cong near the Cambodian border in Phuoc Long Province (Para. 6). A South Vietnamese operation in Kien Hoa Province has killed at least 22 Viet Cong and destroyed an arms factory and 41 sampans (Para. 7). A new massive allied sweep of War Zone "C"--Operation JUNCTION CITY--is planned (Para. 8).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. Communist Political Developments: There
is nothing of significance to report.

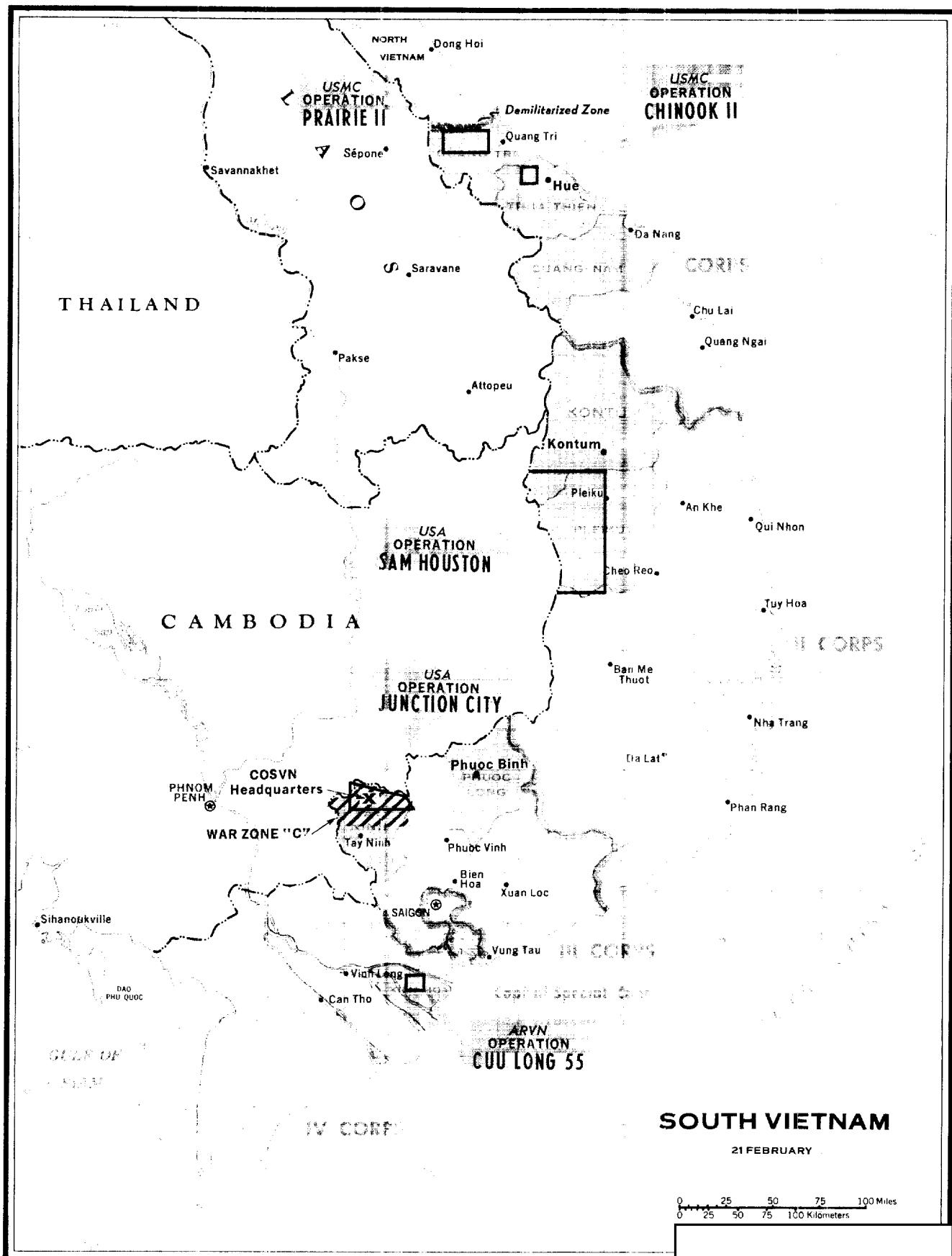
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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Units of the US 4th Infantry Division participating in Operation SAM HOUSTON, presently being conducted in the central highlands provinces of Kontum and Pleiku, were attacked by an estimated battalion-size enemy force about 39 miles southwest of Kontum city on 21 February. The Communists employed mortar and heavy automatic weapons fire against the Americans as they were sweeping an area near the Cambodian border. Artillery and tactical air strikes supported the US troops and after three hours the enemy withdrew. Preliminary friendly casualty reports list two killed, 31 wounded, and two missing.

2. Other elements taking part in the same border-surveillance operation located an enemy arms cache about 42 miles southwest of Kontum city on 20 February. The cache, located in a hut, consisted of four individual weapons, three mortars, 24 grenades, 6,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 300 pounds of explosives, and miscellaneous equipment.

3. Another Communist arms cache was located on 20 February by units of the three-battalion US search-and-destroy Operation PRAIRIE II, presently sweeping the area immediately south of the DMZ in northernmost Quang Tri Province. Included in this cache were two 82-mm. mortars, 24 Chinese Communist antitank rockets, 375 Chinese Communist grenades, 250 pounds of explosives, and assorted clothing, letters, and personal gear.

4. A battle on 21 February between Communist troops and elements of the two-battalion US Marine Operation CHINOOK II resulted in friendly casualties of three marines and one civilian--Professor Bernard Fall--killed and eight marines wounded. This encounter took place about 13 miles northwest of Hue in northern Thua Thien Province. Enemy losses are unknown. Professor Fall, a leading authority on Vietnam, was killed by a boobytrap while accompanying a marine patrol.

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5. A US Marine squad patrolling in the southern part of coastal Quang Nam Province on 20 February made contact with 32 enemy soldiers. Mortar fire and a tactical air strike supported the marines. Ten Communists were killed and 12 weapons captured. There were no American casualties.

6. A South Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) company established heavy contact on 20 February with an estimated reinforced Viet Cong company. The encounter took place near the Cambodian border about 16 miles northwest of Phuoc Binh in Phuoc Long Province. Several tactical air strikes supported the South Vietnamese irregulars and after several hours a second CIDG company was flown in to reinforce the original unit. Friendly casualties were reported as one killed (US) and seven wounded. According to a US body count, 37 Viet Cong were killed.

7. Operation CUU LONG 55, a South Vietnamese Army search-and-destroy operation, began in Kien Hoa Province early on 20 February and met with sporadic enemy resistance. Twenty-two Viet Cong were killed. Sixteen enemy weapons and ten grenades were also captured and one arms factory and 41 sampans were destroyed. Preliminary friendly casualties were reported as one killed and six wounded.

8. A multibattalion US search-and-destroy operation codenamed JUNCTION CITY is scheduled to begin on 22 February in the long-time Viet Cong sanctuary in northern Tay Ninh Province known as War Zone "C." Previous allied operations, including ATTLEBORO late last fall and GADSDEN at present, have probed into portions of this Viet Cong - controlled area, but JUNCTION CITY is the first operation specifically designed to seek out and destroy major Communist forces and headquarters--including the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN)--operating in the War Zone "C" area near the Cambodian border. More than 7,000 enemy troops--including the 2,375-man 271st Viet Cong Regiment, the 1,870-man 272nd Viet Cong Regiment, and the

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1,240-man 101st North Vietnamese Army Regiment--
are believed to be scattered throughout the area
to be covered by this operation. Several B-52
missions have been flown against suspected enemy
targets in the area prior to the initiation of
this operation.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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